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International research stars are coming to Germany

Research Minister Wanka and Humboldt Foundation President Schwarz confer Alexander von Humboldt Professorships

Six researchers from abroad were awarded Alexander von Humboldt Professorships Thursday evening in Berlin. Research Minister Johanna Wanka and the president of the Humboldt Foundation, Helmut Schwarz, presented Germany's best-endowed research award to Giuseppe Caire, Emmanuelle Charpentier, Stefanie Engel, Stuart Parkin, Jairo Sinova und Hidenori Takagi during a special ceremony held in Berlin. The award winners were nominated by German universities and will soon be conducting research in Berlin, Hanover, Osnabruck, Halle, Mainz and Stuttgart. The award is endowed with five million euros for individuals conducting experimental research and 3.5 million euros for researchers working in theoretical fields.

“When stars in their fields leave Stanford and go to Halle or leave Tokyo for Stuttgart, this is not only a reflection of their high regard for the German research system but also for our research policies. We offer greater freedom and value basic research more than most other countries. Whether it be treating hereditary diseases with the DNA scissors, developing new memory and calculation methods for the computers of tomorrow, or designing superconductors for green energy technology of the future - our new Humboldt Professors will reward us with ground-breaking work and ambitious goals”, said Helmut Schwarz, president of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

“Germany offers outstanding conditions for research work. With the Humboldt Professorship, we have developed an excellent instrument for bringing more top international researchers to Germany”, noted Research Minister Wanka. She also congratulated the selected universities and non-university research institutes for their convincing concepts which were a prerequisite for selection. Minister Wanka additionally expressed her pleasure that more women received the prestigious award this year: The molecular biologist Emmanuelle Charpentier and the environmental economist Stefanie Engel have already accepted their appointments; the quantum physicist Francesca Ferlaino is still in negotiations with the University of Ulm.

Every year the Humboldt Foundation awards the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship to up to ten internationally-leading researchers from all disciplines who work in other countries. In addition to candidates’ outstanding academic qualifications, the concepts designed by the universities to offer the researchers and their teams longer-term prospects in Germany are of decisive importance in evaluating the applications.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

Every year, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation enables more than 2,000 researchers from all over the world to spend time researching in Germany. The Foundation maintains a network of well over 26,000 Humboldtians from all disciplines in more than 140 countries worldwide – including 50 Nobel Prize winners.